

## MISPLACED PRIORITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARY MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARY MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I had not planned on speaking today but it reminds me of a group of comedians coming forward today, and blaming President Bush for the energy crisis.

He has been in office a few months, yet the previous administration, President Clinton, did nothing about our energy problems. We became more reliant on foreign oil. We became more reliant on other products to provide services for our people, rather than providing for ourselves.

This Nation has changed dramatically. When I was a child, a person went to turn the light switch on and the lights came on. When they went to fill their gas tank, it was reasonable to fill their gas tank. In those days, we swatted flies and we poisoned rats. Today we set aside habitat for flies and rats. And who pays for it? Private property owners have to pay the price of setting their property aside for some stupid endangered species that some wacko Democratic politician wants to preserve.

In the words of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT), beam me up, too. Both of us need to be out of here.

This is crazy. And we talk about big oil. If we had enough oil, we would not have enough energy to provide an argument for these people to complain about. So if we have less oil, they can complain more about Republicans not providing oil.

Wake up, America. There is something seriously wrong and it is the Democratic Party, excluding the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT) who has finally learned what real world life is like. Buy America; provide energy; close our borders. It is realistic.

Two years ago and three years ago, this body realized there is something wrong with the IRS. In 1913, when we started the Tax Code, it was 11,400 words. The Tax Code today is over 7 million words.

In 1914, people voluntarily paid taxes. The government did not force them to pay taxes. They came forward and said our government needs help. We need to pay taxes.

350,000 good Americans paid taxes the first year and the IRS audited every doggone one of those people who paid voluntary taxes. Beam me up again.

Now we realize the IRS is out of control. There is a problem with this country, and it is the way people vote. If we want energy, let us provide more oil. If we want gas, let us provide more gas. We have not built a refinery in the United States for 22 years.

We have 15 different formularies or 19 formularies required in different States. In California in the L.A. basin,

where I come from, we cannot bring gas from Northern California to our area. We cannot bring it from Washington, from Oregon, from Arizona, from Colorado, from Nevada, because it does not meet our standards. So when we have a problem with refineries, guess what? We have no gas; and yet we are more concerned about preserving flies and rats than we are providing energy for the American people that we are supposed to represent.

Let me say, people are part of the environment, too, and they are at the top of it as far as I am concerned. If we happen to save a rat in the process of saving a human life, so be it. But if we have to poison that rat to save a human life, as far as I am concerned that rat is in trouble.

Last year in California, Fish and Wildlife in October said we need to set habitat aside for the Stevens kangaroo rat, for the gnat catcher and for Longhorn sheep, and they set 2.9 million acres of land aside in California and it looked like a checker board. Now this is not where they live. This is habitat that would sustain those critters. If one does not own habitat, guess what? You own associated habitat. And then we complain that we cannot provide affordable housing for people.

What do we want to do? We want to give them a section 8 voucher from the government.

When one buys a new house in this country, on average 35 percent of the costs of that house are government fees. Now, you tell a young person they are going to go out and buy a \$100,000 home, if they can find one, and \$35,000 of the price of that home is fees to the government? Beam me up again, I would say to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT). Something is seriously wrong with this Nation.

Then we say our children cannot afford to live in our communities. We need to change the direction of this country and we need to be more responsible and accountable to the people that we represent.

How do working people get helped in this Nation? By everything that can be done to engender the best economic environment for businesses, because when businesses do well, guess what happens? They give their employees raises because they need them. They give them better benefits. They give them more vacation pay.

When we create recession because of wacko bureaucratic laws that we pass around here and businesses suffer, guess what they do? They lay people off. People are lucky to work 40 hours a week. They are not surprised if they lose their benefits and have their vacation pay cut.

We need to change the direction of this Nation and start representing the good for the American people.

## ENERGY IN THE WESTERN UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Speaker, that was an extraordinary speech by the gentleman from California (Mr. GARY MILLER) who preceded me in the well, and I will offer a little different perspective on what is going on in energy in the Western U.S.

It is Memorial Day weekend and all across the country Americans and their families are pulling up to the pump and surprise, prices are up, way up. But there is no market manipulation.

The deafening silence of the Bush administration and the runup on gas prices might have something to do with who supported their last campaign but I would not allude that on the floor.

There is no market manipulation. Exxon Mobil, profits \$15.9 billion last year, profits up 102 percent in one year, there is no market manipulation. There is no role for the Federal Government here, except to enable them to drill for more oil and to cut their taxes. That is what the Bush energy plan proposes.

Now, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARY MILLER), I am very surprised that he did not want to talk about some of these things.

Yesterday I talked about Reliant Energy. Reliant Energy, based in Houston, Texas, profits up 1,800 percent in one year; bought a few generating plants in California. It was revealed in the San Francisco Chronicle on Sunday, with interviews with some of their plant operators, that the plant operators were linked by telephone to their commodity trader speculators and the commodity trader speculators watched the charts and when the price of energy went up, they said crank up the plants. When the price of energy went down, they said crank down those plants. They did this on as frequently as 10-minute increments.

That destroys the plants, obviously does not provide reliability or keep the lights on for the people in California and the Western United States, but it is incredibly profitable; 1,800 percent runup in profits in one year. But there is no manipulation.

The hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil folks at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission appointed by President George Bush, Mr. Hebert, the chairman; the Secretary of Energy; the vice president of the United States, they do not think there is any market manipulation or profiteering or price gouging going on here. It is normal for a company to increase its profits by manipulating the market and driving up its profits 1,800 percent one year.

Now today in the Los Angeles Times, closer to the gentleman who preceded

me, we have, "Executive tells FERC Hearing of Collusion on Natural Gas." Natural gas produced in Texas, El Paso Natural Gas, bought the pipeline capacity to ship gas between Texas and California. It is used for electricity generation and to heat homes and run businesses. Guess what? They bought the capacity but they did not use it, and they would not let anybody else use it so they could drive up the price of energy.

There is extraordinary, unbelievable market manipulation, price gouging, going on in the Western United States, which is imperiling the entire economy of the Western U.S., not just California. The Pacific Northwest is at risk, too. We are having a drought and we are paying more in the wholesale energy market than are Californians because of these manipulated prices, because of this unbelievable profiteering.

What is the response from the Bush administration? Drill ANWR. Well, we do not use oil to generate electricity. I have said that to the vice president. That does not matter. They want to drill ANWR. Their bosses, Enron, Exxon, Chevron, Reliant, El Paso Natural Gas and others, they want something here. Let us manipulate this. Let us pretend the crisis is caused by, as the gentleman before me said, the environmental rules, and let us pretend that they are not obscenely manipulating the market and profiteering. Blame someone other than those really responsible.

That is the agenda of this administration. That is the agenda of their energy policy, and I do not believe that it is going to sell with the American people, and I certainly hope it does not sell here in Congress.

#### LACK OF PLANNING AND NO DOMESTIC ENERGY POLICY HAS LED TO THE ENERGY CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COLLINS. Madam Speaker, I could not help but get a little bristle on the back of my neck sitting in my office listening to all of the rhetoric that is being said here on the floor this morning.

The complaints about the marketplace, the complaints about charges, the cost of goods based on supply and demand in the marketplace and, yes, the prices are too high. It is costing too much for families to pull up to the gas pump for the purpose of either commuting to work, visiting family or taking a vacation.

Why is it like this? It is because of the lack of planning and having a domestic energy policy for this Nation.

The previous administration avoided the issue, stayed away from the issue,

did not want to address it, and over the last few years we have become more and more dependent on foreign oil, and that is wrong. But it is not only just the oil. We cannot even handle the refinery of oil for gasoline and fuel and other products.

What we do not hear them talk about is the price that Congress charges for gasoline and fuel, and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT) is well aware of this. Yes, we charge, we the Congress of the United States, charge for every gallon of gasoline and diesel fuel that is used in this Nation. Eighteen cents a gallon for gasoline; 24 cents a gallon for diesel fuel, fuel that is used to transport products all over this Nation that we each buy as a consumer.

People do not think that adds to the price of those products?

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We charge 4.3 cents a gallon for aviation fuel. You do not think that does not add to the price of an airline ticket? 4.3 cents to the railroads. You do not think that does not add to the product they carry? 4.3 cents for barge service. You do not think that does not add to the price of the product that they carry? It does. But you do not hear anything about that from this well. But those are charges that are administered by the Congress of the United States.

But, you know, there are a couple of good things about that though. We all pay that same rate, and those rates and those prices and those funds that come into the Congress are used for transportation products, for infrastructure, highways, bridges, things that we need, must have.

Of course, we have a few environmental laws that prevent us oftentimes from putting in the projects that are needed so we can commute without sitting in long lines. We all experience that. But we pay the same price for those things, and the funds are put to good use.

You do not hear them talking about the overcharge that we are levying on every working person that is in this country to operate this government, and we have different charges to operate this government. You and I can pull up to the gas pump, we will pay the same price. You and I can go into the same store, buy a like item, we will pay the same price for it. Anyplace in the marketplace that we go together, stand side-by-side and buy the same product, we will pay practically the same price for it, no matter who you are, what income level you are at.

But when it comes to paying for the operation of government, it is different, much different. We do not have the same price. In fact, we charge five different prices to individuals to operate this government; five prices. Yes, five prices we charge working people across this country to operate their

government. Those five prices are the five marginal tax rates based on income.

They talk about the rich. Yes, the rich make a lot of money. But they pay a lot of tax too. A low income person, \$30,000, \$45,000 a year, they pay 15 percent. They are in that 15 percent bracket. That is a lot of money too. But it goes from 15 to 28, to 31, to 36, to 39.6 percent, based on the levels of income. Is anything fair about charging five different prices for the operation of government?

You never hear anything about that. I do not think it is fair. That is what we are trying to address with the tax bill in the conference that is going on today, is to reduce the charge that we charge for operation of government and try to make it a little more fair. Five prices to operate the government, charged by the Congress of the United States.

#### HISTORIC TAX RELIEF

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, today we stand on the brink of an awesome opportunity, the opportunity to lift the burden of taxes off families, small businesses and family farms, the opportunity to pass the largest tax cut package in over 20 years. We have a moral obligation to act on this opportunity and remove Uncle Sam's hand out of the pockets of hard-working men and women.

Under the current tax system, Madam Speaker, the average dual-earner family will pay more than \$26,000 in taxes to the government. This equals out to be the first five months of their annual salary. This is more than the family will spend on food, clothing and shelter combined.

Madam Speaker, we often talk about the progress we have made. Yet, according to the Washington-based tax foundation, taxes at all levels now consume 39 percent of the average dual-earners' family income. This is more than the amount that serfs were obligated to pay to their mid-evil lords. This, simply put, is wrong.

As we enter into the final stages of the bill's passage that is being debated in conference committee today, I implore the Congress to stand firm in our commitment to working families. The House bill was a great start, but it is the bare minimum of what we can and should accomplish.

The decision to scale back tax relief over the next 10 years means that less than 25 percent of the surplus will be returned to taxpayers. Therefore, it is not only important, but imperative that we lower marginal rates on income if we are to improve the economy's lagging performance.